

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 COME-00
EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 SSM-03 SCS-06 CA-01 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 /073 W
-----047164 262011Z /73

O R 261829Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3827
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PINS, SOPN, CASC, IS, JO
SUBJECT: ISRAELI RELATIONS WITH BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 1728 (B) STATE 161688 (C) STATE 161650

1. POLOFF ASKED GONNEN, MFA'S LIAISON WITH THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, TO CHECK INTO THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE STATUS OF THE EXPATRIATE INSTRUCTORS AT BIR ZEIT. GONNEN WAS AWARE OF WASHINGTON POST STORY REFERRED TO IN REF. B AND C AND TERMED IT TWISTED. REGARDING POINT IN ARTICLE THAT NON-RENEWAL OF RESIDENT STATUS OF EXPATRIATE PROFESSORS AT BIR ZEIT AKIN TO EXPULSION, GONNEN STATED THAT MOST OF THEM HAD ENTERED THE COUNTRY ON A TOURIST VISA AND WERE LECTURING WITHOUT A WORK PERMIT. GONNEN EXPRESSED VIEW THAT EXPATRIATES HAD ENTERED AS TOURSISTS IN ORDER TO AVOID THE MILGOV APPROVAL PROCESS. ONCE ON THE SPOT, THEY DEMANDED THE RIGHT TO REMAIN. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO THE GOI HAD GIVEN PERMISSION FOR THEM TO STAY UNTIL THE END OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR (JUNE 30). NONE- THE LESS, GONNEN SAID, THE GOI REFUSED TO ACCEPT FAIT
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ACCOMPLIS. REGARDING THE COMING SCHOOL YEAR, GONNEN STATED THAT THE RECTOR OF BIR ZEIT MUST APPLY TO THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN RAMALLAH FOR WORK PERMITS FOR EXPATRIATE STAFF BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL.

2. REGARDING ALLEGATION IN ARTICLE THAT ISRAELI BEHAVIOR WAS PART OF "SYSTEMATIC ISRAELI ATTEMPT AT RUINING THE

UNIVERSITY," GONNEN TERMED THIS NONSENSE.

"THER WERE NO UNIVERSITIES BEFORE 1967 ON THE WEST BANK
AND NOW THERE ARE FOUR," HE SAID. "WE APPROVED
ESTABLISHMENT OF BIR ZEIT, WHY SHOULD WE TRY TO RUIN IT?"

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE A POLITICAL ELEMENT
IN THE ISRAELI ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EXPATRIATE PROFESSORS
REQUEST TO REMAIN, IF WHAT GONNEN SAYS IS TRUE, THE
ISRAELIS APPEAR TO HAVE LEGAL GROUNDS FOR THEIR REFUSAL.
ENTRANCE TO ISRAEL ON A TOURIST VISA AND ACCEPTANCE
OF EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT CHANGING STATUS IS A TECHNICAL
VIOLATION OF ISRAELI IMMIGRATION LAW. IN THE US THIS
WOULD BE DEEMED SUFFICIENT FOR INS TO REQUEST VOLUNTARY
DEPARTURE. WHATEVER THE UNDERLYING MOTIVES, EMPLOYMENT
ON A TOURIST VISA PROVIDES THE ISRAELIS WITH THE NECESSARY
LEGAL JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTING THE EXPATRIATE IN-
STRUCTORS TO LEAVE THE WEST BANK.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, UNIVERSITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV08048
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780265-0303
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780618/aaaaapww.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4136667f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 JERUSALEM 1728, 78 STATE 161688, 78 STATE 161650
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2201740
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI RELATIONS WITH BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY
TAGS: PBOR, PINS, SOPN, CASC, IS, JO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4136667f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014